IIT, Kanpur, Shri Ramakrishnan, Sr. Director, MIT and Dr. Michale Best, MIT Media Lab, USA.

The Head Quarters of Media Lab Asia is located in Mumbai in one of the Industrial Parks.

The process of acquiring identifying research nodes, their space procurement of equipment of the initial people, refinement of projects and procurement of equipment for research activities is in progress. The first board meeting was held on 27th September, 2001.

Smart Card

538. SHRI RUMANDLA RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had set up a group for examining the standards and identifying the sectors for smart card applications in India;

(b) if so, whether the Committee has submitted its report;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether Government have accepted the recommendations; and

(e) if so, by what time final decision in this regard is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): (a) Yes, Sir . A Committee has been set up to formulate common standards for multi-application smart cards in India.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) to (e) Do not arise.

Restriction on membership of the trade unions

539. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to restrict membership of the trade unions to employees only and restrict outside members in trade unions; and

(b) if so, by when, a final decision is likely to be taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI MUNI LALL) (a) and (b) The Trade Unions (Amendment) Bill, 2001 has been passed by the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha on 2.8.2001 and 24.8.2001 respectively. The Hon'ble President has given assent on 3.9.2001 and the Trade

Unions (Amendment) Act, 2001 has been published in the Gazette of India on 3.9.2001. A trade union will be required to have a membership of 10% or 100, whichever is less, subject to a minimum of 7 workmen, who are employed in the establishment, for registration of the trade union.

The proportion of office bearers of a registered trade union, except not more than 1/3rd of the total number of office bearers or five, whichever is less, shall be persons actually engaged or employed in the establishment or industry with which the trade union is connected.

MOF stand on labour reforms

540. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item MOF stand may further delay labour reforms appearing in the 'The Economic Times' dated the 22nd October, 2001.

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto;

(c) the details of the stand taken by the Ministry of Finance which is likely to delay the labour reforms; and

(d) the steps taken to resolve the objections raised so as to expedite implementation of the labour reforms?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI MUNI LALL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) Review/updation of labour laws is continuous process in order to make them in tune with the prevailing situation and emerging needs. Taking into consideration the emerging global economic situation, a need has been felt to make amendments in certain labour legislations including those announced in the Budget proposals for 2001-2002. The National Commission on Labour already set up by the Government would also, *inter-alia*, taken into account the emerging economic environment involving rapid technology changes, globalisation of economy, liberalization of trade and industry, emphasis on international competitiveness and also the need for bringing the existing laws in tune with the future labour market needs and demands, the report of the Commission is expected by 15.02.2002.